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**Subject:** Four-County sampling sets reference point for next steps in Refugio Response

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **Four-County sampling sets reference point for next steps in Refugio Response**

**Santa Barbara, Calif. —** The Refugio Response Unified Command (UC) coordinated a beach tarball sampling for Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles and Orange counties July 9-10. Sampling experts for the UC along with county representatives and non-governmental organizations (NGO) participated.

This collaborative sampling provides a reference point for the monitoring and maintenance of beaches potentially affected by the Refugio oil spill incident. Sampling used standard procedures for consistency.

By having standard sampling process and definitions for beach oiling terms, NGOs, local, state, and federal representatives will improve oil sighting reports over the coming months.

## **The Process**

Tarball samples were collected at a variety of locations from Gaviota Beach in Santa Barbara, along the coast to Newport Beach in Orange County. Each sample was documented, split into three, and secured for transport to agency laboratories for testing to determine the oil source.

Results from this sampling will be released publically and posted to [www.refugioresponse.com](http://www.refugioresponse.com) when they become available.

Using standard oiling terms and definitions, beach monitors and surveyors recorded their observations which will help state and federal officials determine if an oil sighting is mostly likely from a natural seep or from residual from the spill.

## **Background**

On May 19, the Plains Pipeline, LLC Line 901 leaked and spilled oil that flowed along a culvert to Refugio State Beach where it reached the Pacific Ocean. Responders established a Unified Command comprised of the US Coast Guard, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Office of Spill Prevention and Response, Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management, and Plains All American Pipeline (the responsible party). At the height of the response, more than 1,400 people were working in the field with several hundred at the Incident Command Post supporting the response effort. For more information on the incident, visit [www.refugioresponse.com](http://www.refugioresponse.com).

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